

SENATE BILL REPORT

2SHB 1513

As Reported by Senate Committee On:
State Government, Tribal Relations & Elections, February 19, 2018

Title: An act relating to collecting youth voter registration sign up information.

Brief Description: Collecting youth voter registration sign up information.

Sponsors: House Committee on State Govt, Elections & IT (originally sponsored by Representatives Bergquist, Stambaugh, Frame, Hudgins, Sawyer, Slatter, Macri, Gregerson, Peterson, McBride, Doglio, Appleton, Fitzgibbon, Goodman, Tharinger, Farrell, Pollet, Ormsby, Dolan and Riccelli).

Brief History: Passed House: 2/12/18, 52-46.

Committee Activity: State Government, Tribal Relations & Elections: 2/16/18, 2/19/18 [DP-TRAN, DNP].

Brief Summary of Bill

- Permits persons at least 16 years of age to register to vote, but prohibits adding minors to the voter rolls until such time as the person will be 18 years of age by the next election.
- Exempts voter registration application records of persons under 18 years of age from public disclosure requirements.
- Requires social studies teachers and county auditors to coordinate voter registration events on Temperance and Good Citizenship Day in history or social studies classes for high school seniors.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON STATE GOVERNMENT, TRIBAL RELATIONS & ELECTIONS

Majority Report: Do pass and be referred to Committee on Transportation.
Signed by Senators Hunt, Chair; Kuderer, Vice Chair; Saldaña and Zeiger.

Minority Report: Do not pass.
Signed by Senator Miloscia, Ranking Member.

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

Staff: Samuel Brown (786-7470)

Background: Registering to Vote. Persons who are age 18 or older and who are United States citizens that have lived in the state, county, and precinct for 30 days immediately preceding an election are entitled to vote. The National Voter Registration Act requires states to provide the opportunity to register to vote for federal elections.

Washington adopted the Motor Voter Act, requiring that the Department of Licensing (DOL) provide voter registration services. Before issuing an original license, identification card, or license renewal, the licensing agent must determine if the applicant wants to register to vote or transfer an existing voter registration. If so, the agent provides the applicant with a voter registration form with instructions, and records the applicant's request to register to vote. The person must provide the driver's licensing agent with information necessary to ensure correct identification and location of residence. Each driver's licensing facility in the state is required to send completed voter registration forms to the Secretary of State's (SOS) office.

In addition to DOL, the following agencies and programs offer voter registration:

- the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) Community Services Division;
- the DSHS Aging and Long-Term Support Administration;
- the DSHS Division of Vocational Rehabilitation;
- the DSHS Developmental Disabilities Administration;
- the DSHS Aging and Disabilities Service Administration;
- the Department of Services for the Blind;
- the Health Care Authority; and
- the Health Benefits Exchange.

Voter Registration of Persons Under 18 Years of Age. Currently several states and Washington, D.C. permit individuals to register to vote before reaching 18 years of age, but provide that such persons are not eligible to participate in state elections and do not appear on voter registration lists until reaching 18 years of age. Persons may register to vote at 16 years of age in California, Colorado, Delaware, Florida, Hawaii, Maryland, Rhode Island, and Washington, D.C. Oregon permits 17-year-olds to register to vote. Georgia, Iowa, and Missouri permit voter registration six months before an individual's eighteenth birthday. In all state elections in those states, persons are not eligible to participate in an election until reaching 18 years of age.

Temperance and Good Citizenship Day. On January 16, or the preceding Friday if January 16 falls on a weekend, each public school observes Temperance and Good Citizenship Day. The Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) must annually produce a program for teachers to use on Temperance and Good Citizenship Day.

Summary of Bill: Voter Registration of Persons Under 18 Years of Age. A person who is at least 16 years of age and who meets all other voter registration requirements may register to vote electronically, or at any location where voter registration is permitted, but may not be added to the state voter list until such time as the person will be 18 years of age by the next election. Information provided in a voter registration application by a person under 18 years of age is exempt from public disclosure and copying and inclusion on the jury source list

until the person is added to the state voter list, except for the purpose of processing and delivering ballots.

Temperance and Good Citizenship Day. Annually on Temperance and Good Citizenship Day, as resources allow, social studies teachers must coordinate voter registration events in each history or social studies class attended by high school seniors, with support from county auditors. Teachers must make sign up and registration available to all students. Events must encourage students who will be 18 years of age by the next general election to register to vote online from the classroom. Paper registration forms must also be made available in the classroom.

Annually by December 1, OSPI must consult with the SOS to distribute youth voter registration materials. OSPI and the SOS must also provide registration methods that enable the electronic collection of information regarding the number of students registered to vote on Temperance and Good Citizenship Day, with a goal of 50,000 new registrations of 17 and 18-year olds annually. Beginning March 1, 2020, OSPI must report on yearly progress regarding distribution of youth voter materials, number of youths registered to vote by county, and recommendations to increase youth voter registration.

Other Provisions. The Class C felony regarding voter registration without legal qualification does not apply to persons under age 18 who sign up to register to vote. The statewide voter registration database must provide for the storage of pending voter registrations of persons who will turn 18 before the next general election.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Creates Committee/Commission/Task Force that includes Legislative members: No.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect on July 1, 2019.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony: PRO: 16 and 17-year olds are locked out of motor voter, the most popular method of voter registration. The bill balances the opportunity to preregister to vote with a civic education component to teach students about the responsibility to exercise the right to vote. Preregistration appears to have a positive and persistent effect on future voter participation. County auditors want to engage youth and are working to protect the information of pending voters. Preregistration is not just one touch with the young person; they go back to high school and also get a civic education component. The bill contains safeguards to protect the information of young people.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Representative Steve Bergquist, Prime Sponsor; Alex Hur, Washington Voting Justice Coalition; Toby Guevin, Thurston County Auditor's Office; Vicky Dalton, Spokane County Auditor; Michael White, Meridian High School; David Elliott, Office of the Secretary of State.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: No one.